VERSES · ALONG · THE · WAY

MARY E. BLAKE

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VERSES ALONG THE WAY

BY

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To

MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER.

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ALONG THE WAY.

A GREETING.

IRELAND! Mother unknown,
Sitting alone by the water,
Lift up your eyes to your own,
Stretch out your arms to your daughter!
Many and many a day have I longed for your green robe's splendor,
Your eyes of the deep sea gray, your strong love patient and tender;
For the croon of the welcoming voice, and the smile half joy and half sadness.
Soul of my soul rejoice, for this is the hour of thy gladness!

Sure if I never had heard
What land had given me birth,
And cradled the spirit's bird
On its first weak flight to earth;
If I never had heard the name of thy sorrow and strength divine,
Or felt in my pulses the flame of the fire they had caught from thine,

I would know by this rapture alone that
sweeps through me now like a flood,
That the Irish skies were my own, and my
blood was the Irish blood!

Proud did I hold my race,
Yet knew not what pride might dare;
Fair did I deem thy face,
But never one-half so fair;
Like a dream with deep happiness fraught
that some happier dawn makes true,
Nothing was glad in my thought but gladdens
still more in you —
From ivied tower and wall, and primrose pale
on the lea,
To vales where the bright streams call to the
lilting bird in the tree.

How can I frame the thought
That sets all my soul aglow!
How can I speak as I ought
The longing that moves me so!
My comrades laugh like a boy whose heart to
pleasure is stirred,
But my heart is weeping with joy while my
lips speak never a word;

Here where the green hills start from the
breast of the deep blue water,
Ireland! land of my heart, stretch out your
arms to your daughter!

JUNE.

March is a trumpet flower,
And April a crocus wild;
May is a harebell slender
With the clear blue eyes of a child;
July is the cup of a tulip
Where gold and crimson meet;
And August a tiger lily,
Tawny with passion and heat;
But Thou art the rose of the world,
Precious, and glowing, and sweet.

Fair is the flush of the dawning
Over the face of the sky;
Sweet is the tangle of music
From wild birds fluttering by;
Brilliant the glow of the sunset,
And graceful the bound of the deer;
Glad is the laugh of the children,
Ringing like joy bells clear;
But what can compare with thy beauty
O red, red rose of the year!

AN ORIOLE.

A DAZZLE of yellow, a quiver of wings,
A flash like a beam from the sun's rays shaken;
And high on the tree tops an oriole sings,
Dizzy with gladness, like hearts afloat
On an ocean of love in a fairy boat,
While the joy bells of life unto bliss awaken.

Only an instant, and then away
Like the flight of a thought through the summer weather;
But still and forever the song shall stay;
To wake in my soul through the winter's night
The rapturous thrill of that swift delight,
When it and the oriole sang together.

IN THE MOUNTAINS.

I.

A BREEZY DAY.

The day was dark and glum as when
  Gay youth sees age advancing;
There came a wee breeze up the glen
  And set the leaves a-dancing.

It lilted to the nodding grass,
  It whistled through the rushes,
It hustled all the bonny buds
  Among the bonny bushes.

It tossed the mists above the hills,
  It pulled the clouds asunder,
And let the shining sky above
  Look down in blue-eyed wonder.

Off flew the frown from Nature's face,
  And smiles began to wimple;
The little birds laughed loud and shrill
  Above the pool's blue dimple.

Care flew as fly the mists of dawn
  Before the sun's light glancing, —
And all because that saucy breeze
  Had set the green leaves dancing.

So blithely glanced their twinkling feet
  In such a maze of gladness,
So loud the piping winds and sweet,
  That oft in hours of sadness

When weary falls the winter night
  Upon some lost endeavor,
Some memory dear of past delight,
  Some fair dream gone forever,

My soul afloat on fancy's wings
  Shall seek this spot entrancing
And hear the breeze that pipes and thrills
  And see the green leaves dancing.

II.

UNDER THE PINES.

When the Winter's rime
Clogs the wheels of time
And the earth's warm blood grows thin and gray,
Death doth conquer life on sea and shore, —
Summer being o'er, —
Only for the sunshine do we pray.

When the Summer's rune
Sets the world in tune,
Gives it voice for speech and eyes for sight, —
God! we thank Thee! — comes a time at last, —
Winter being past, —
When Thy shadows gladden as Thy light.

III.

A MOUNTAIN SABBATH.

Here rests the Sabbath of the soul,
On this far-climbing, tranquil height!
Where waves of sound through pine boughs roll
Like organ tones, now sad, now bright,

Uplifted to the warmth and glow
Of some new world of peace and love,
The deep blue sparkling sea below,
The deep blue wondrous sky above!
Across the far horizon's rim
The purple-hooded mountains stand,
To swell the mighty voiceless hymn
That rises from the silent land.
No sight, no sound of earth's unrest,
Of passion's fret, of sordid care;
The holiest only and the best
Can rise into this purer air.

O fruitful hours of idleness,
Whose rich repose our poor toil shames,
With all diviner thoughts possess
The lives long bent to lowlier aims!
For sure, with eyes made clear to see
Earth's finer bliss and pure delights,
God's heaven of love must nearer be,
His voice more clear, upon the heights.

DISCORDANCE.

Once the sky was dark and drear,
Mourning for the dying year;
Ocean shrieked in bitter pain
Under lashes of the rain;
Toothèd rocks rose black and thin, —
Rakes to draw dead men within;
Cries like mocking demons passed
Through the howling of the blast:
Yet thy face was sweet to see,
Since thou brought'st my love to me,
O fair, fair sea!

Once the rose of dawn bloomed fair
In the dreaming summer air;
Sleeping waters stirred and smiled,
Dimpled like a waking child;
Little wàves with tender speech
Kissed the white feet of the beach;

And the cooing of the birds
Filled the air like happy words.
God! that then his eyes should be
Closed forever under thee,
O false, false sea!

ON THE SEA.

I.

FIRST EVENING.

Gray in the fading skies;
Gray in the deep sea under;
And dark on its wide white wings
The good ship quivers and springs,
Dipping into the night and cleaving the waves asunder,
As a sea-gull circles and flies.

Loneliness half, and deep peace,
Twins of the silence draw near me;
Soft as the cooing of birds
Kisses and lovingest words
From lips that I touched last night, come through the dark to cheer me.
And ere their whisperings cease,

Blend with their lingering tone
Voices and lips more tender,

That long in the churchyard sod
Have known the sweet twilight of God,
And now, looking backward to earth, from
Heaven's more wonderful splendor,
Are speaking to me alone.

II.

A CALM DAY.

Where hath the world departed,
With all its envy and woe, its moil and its
care;
The grief of its sons broken-hearted,
The tear of its sorrow, the wail of despair?
Here like a child on the breast of its mother
naught cometh to me
But peace and rest, peace and rest, and the
infinite joy of the sea.

Well have I known the deep sadness,
That stains with shadow and ruth the garment
of life,
The echo that mocks at its gladness,
The weight of its sorrow, the noise of its strife;

Nought of its bitterness, nought of its wailing I hear or I see,
But peace and rest, peace and rest, and the infinite joy of the sea.

But a rapture of light in the heavens,
A glow that speaks to the heart like promise of dawn;
A thrill of wide freedom, that leavens
The being with sense of oppression withdrawn
Sweet, as if nearer the portals of glory the soul floated free
In peace and rest, peace and rest, and the infinite joy of the sea.

III.

STORM.

Whither, O God, hath evanished
Thy near brooding sense of delight!
The calm of sweet silence where banished,
The peace of the night, —
Only gray mist like a shroud tossed low on a rain-beaten grave;
And the flail of the wind smiting loud, and the answering roar of the wave!

Beyond, a blind terror of fate,
A conflict of fear and of doubt,
A clamor of darkness and hate,
And the sky blotted out!
Beneath, but the quavering cry of timbers that strain through the wrack,
And stealthy fierce waves bounding high like sleuthhounds of death on our track!

IV.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

The grime of the land falls away like a clod from the heel of the ship;
The deep sapphire cup of the sea holds its wine of delight to her lip;
And she quaffs of its strength and its joy as she bounds over mountains of foam,
And speeds like a bird in its flight
Through courses of day and of night
To the headlands of Home!

O world of our dreams, as you die in the haze of the sunset's red gold!
O blue of the brave Tuscan sky! O glory and grandeur of old!

Shrines of saints, tombs of kings, all the light
that illumines the earth's wondrous tome,
How ye fade as a torch dim and burned,
Once the eyes of the soul have been turned
To the headlands of Home!

IN MAY TIME.

In May time! In May time
'Gin little leaves to dance;
The apple bloom and cherry
Make all the orchards merry,
And under sheath of flowery wreath
Doth thorn bush hide his lance.

In May time! In May time
The little birds do call,
And sweet their shrill pipes ringing
Set all the world a-singing,
While gossip gay and roundelay
Bring joy to one and all.

In May time! In May time,
My heart, and can it be
That thou, with greater power
For joy than bird or flower,
Doth frozen rest within my breast

And from the sunshine flee
And feel the fret of winter yet
Because one frowns on thee?
Alack! And woe is me!

AVENGED!

When thou wert here, he thought it hard to
shun thee;
He feared lest some time Fate should bring
thee near,
So deep he felt the wrong that he had done
thee, —
While thou wert here.

Now thou art dead, his heavy heart grows
lighter,
The strain of fear that wrung the soul is
fled;
His sun of life grows ever bright and brighter,
Now thou art dead.

Ah fool and blind! Dividing seas might
thunder
Beneath the stars to keep his pathway clear,
A world obtrude to hold your ways asunder,
While thou wert here;

But now, nor depth nor space can aught avail
him;
By night, by day, while time and life go on,
Soul unto soul thy spirit shall assail him,
Now thou art gone.

THE EQUINOCTIAL.

THROUGH the long night the surges roared
In hoarse, wild heat, against the rocks
Whose flinty horns their white sides gored, —
  Then came the Equinox!

No joy was in the face of day,
The air was full of wrath and strife,
The pall of cloud rack torn away
  Had more of death than life.

Swift from its stormy grasp is hurled
The mighty sheaf of thunderous spears;
While, hushed in dread, a silent world
  Its shout of triumph hears.

Sullen, with deep and lowering brow,
Fierce foam of wrath upon its lips,
And strong breath smiting keel and prow
  The quivering, doomed ships,

The sunset meets its eyes' wild light
Unquenched amid its tangled locks;
God help their need who meet to-night
The awful Equinox!

IN A CITY STREET.

Nay! think not Spring is all for you
  Because amid your woodland bowers
The torch of life flames up anew
  In maple tips and springing flowers,

Because your wide horizon dips
  Beyond a world of beauty glowing,
And earth through all her being sips
  The wine of gladness, sparkling, flowing.

For us too Spring hath spent her store;
  In all her joy are we partakers,
Although the plot beside our door
  Has fewer feet than yours has acres.

The slim green lances of the grass,
  The few pale crocus buds upspringing,
The wandering birds that pause, and pass,
  To fresher fields their swift way winging;

The radiant gleam of heaven's blue
  Above the narrowing rooftree's border,
The early sunbeam creeping through
  Like shining spear of silent warder;

The moon that comes in silver state
  And fills the place with royal splendor,
The fading light that lingers late
  To meet the night in wooing tender;

The subtle sense that fills the air
  With some divine unspoken glory, —
All these are ours; nor can you share
  With deeper peace the old sweet story

Than I, with this small sod that tells
  Of joy and life again upspringing,
And this sweet chime of crocus bells
  To airs of heaven set a-ringing.

AT TWENTY-ONE.

The Youth who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
  And by the vision splendid
  Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.
WORDSWORTH.

AND so, if Wordsworth's song be true, —
  And if he knew not, who shall know it, —
The common day has dawned for you,
  That comes at last to sage and poet.

The clouds of glory torn and spent,
  The heavenly light behind them faded,
The man must pitch his moving tent
  In lands by care and sorrow shaded.

Believe it not, O heart of mine!
  The psalm of life rings truer, clearer;
Beyond the glow and glory shine,
  And every step but brings them nearer.

Keep for thy star, as still of old,
The love that makes of mankind brothers,
And hold within that heart of gold,
So harsh for self, so kind for others.

The blindest soul must catch the light
From passing marvels' regal splendor;
Be thine the eyes to read aright
Earth's common beauty glad and tender.

Be thine that holier sense that heeds
The hidden harmonies of duty,
And finds, to fill its daily needs,
God's constant spring of love and beauty.

So heaven shall lie about thy way;
Not all unknown, as mid the blisses
Of childhood's short unconscious day,
Whose loftiest sky was smiles and kisses,

But pure, serene, o'erarching all
The toil of life with something finer,
Till from the ore the dross shall fall
And virgin gold reward the miner.

O not behind the heavenly shore
  The psalm of life rings truer, clearer;
The light, the glory, is before,
  And each strong step but brings it nearer.

THE DAWNING O' THE YEAR.

All ye who love the Springtime — and who
but loves it well
When the little birds do sing, and the buds
begin to swell! —
Think not ye ken its beauty or know its face
so dear,
Till ye look upon old Ireland, in the dawning
o' the year!

For where in all the earth is there any joy like
this;
When the skylark sings and soars like a spirit
into bliss,
While the thrushes in the bush strain their
small brown mottled throats,
Making all the air rejoice with their clear and
mellow notes:

And the blackbird on the hedge in the golden
sunset glow
Trills with saucy, side-tipped head to the bonny
nest below;

And the dancing wind slips down through the leaves of the boreen,
And all the world rejoices in the wearing o' the green.

For 't is green, green, green, where the ruined towers are gray,
And it 's green, green, green, all the happy night and day;
Green of leaf and green of sod, green of ivy on the wall,
And the blessed Irish shamrock with the fairest green of all.

There the primrose breath is sweet, and the yellow gorse is set
A crown of shining gold on the headlands brown and wet;
Not a nook of all the land but the daisies make to glow,
And the happy violets pray in their hidden cells below.

And it 's there the earth is merry, like a young thing newly made
Running wild amid the blossoms in the field and in the glade,

Babbling ever into music under skies with soft clouds piled,
Like the laughter and the tears in the blue eyes of a child.

But the green, green, green, O 't is that is blithe and fair!
In the fells and on the hills, gay and gladsome as the air,
Lying warm above the bog, floating brave on crag and glen,
Thrusting forty banners high where another land has ten.

Sure Mother Nature knows of her sore and heavy grief,
And thus with soft caress would give solace and relief;
Would fold her close in loveliness to keep her from the cold,
And clasp the mantle o'er her heart with emeralds and gold.

So ye who love the Springtime — and who but loves it well
When the little birds do sing, and the buds begin to swell! —

Think not ye ken its beauty or know its face so dear
Till ye meet it in old Ireland in the dawning o' the year!

IN MIDWINTER.

The pine and the oak!
The pine and the oak!
Never in summer a voice they woke
Of singing or sighing my heart within;
Dazzled and dazed by the sunlight's gold,
And dance of the grass over hill and wold,
And breezes that pressed with such petulant din, —
I could not wait for the words they spoke;
Nor look for the dryads that wander and moan,
Left in the shade of the green wood alone;
Thinking with weeping and wringing of hands,
Of the glad lost time in the fair Greek lands,
When faun and satyr together met
In royal sport under palms and larches,
And the mystic light of a day long set
Pierced through the gloom of the forest arches.

But now in the snow and frost,
When joy of the eyes is lost,
And under the dull sky gray and low,
The wraith of the dead year wanders slow, —
Sweet, as a song without words,
The flight and the music of birds,
Glad leaves set to a June day's tuning,
Echo of dreams in a sultry nooning,
Whisper of blooms in woodlands hiding,
Scent of the rose on soft airs riding,
Comes to the trancéd ear,
Melody soft and clear.
And visions of beauty rare and tender:
Dian enwrapped in her maiden splendor
Turning young Acteon's gaze on death;
Joyous Bacchantes with lusty breath
Dancing before the wine God's car;
Or shy pale nymphs in the aisles afar,
Smiling behind their locks, half hid
From ardent eyes of some daring lover, —
These are what fancy, unforbid,
In shade of the pine and the oak discover.

TRANSITION.

The golden woods shine like a glory; the air
is as balm;
The land is as fair as a story; the waves sing
a psalm;
Like censers of incense the pungent swift odors
ascend;
And far in the distant horizon the sea and
sky blend;
We know not where Heaven beginneth, or
where Earth may end.

Dear Heart! read the joy and the sweetness;
endeavor to see
The lesson in all its completeness that God
giveth thee:
So full of the light of the spirit the body
should glow,
When nearing its time of departure, that we
could not know
Which step crossed the threshold of Heaven
and left us below!

DAISIES.

Daisies!
Low in the grass and high in the clover,
Starring the green earth over and over,
Now into white waves tossing and breaking,
Like a foaming sea when the wind is waking,
Now standing upright, tall and slender,
Showing their deep heart's golden splendor,
Daintily bending,
Airily lending
Garlands of flowers for earth's adorning,
Fresh with the bloom of a summer morning:
High on the slope, low in the hollow,
Where eye can reach or foot can follow,
Shining with innocent fearless faces
Out of the depths of lonely places,
Till the glad heart sings their praises,
Here are the daisies,
The daisies.

See them ebbing and flowing,
Like tides with the full moon going;

Spreading their generous largess free
For hand to touch and eye to see,
  In dust of the wayside growing,
  On rock-ribbed upland blowing,
By meadow brooklets glancing,
On barren fields a-dancing,
Till the world forgets to burrow and grope,
And rises aloft on the wings of hope;
    Oh! of all posies,
    Lilies or roses,
    Sweetest or fairest,
    Richest or rarest,
That earth in its joy to heaven upraises,
      Give me the daisies!

Why? For they glow with the spirit of youth,
Their beautiful eyes have the glory of truth,
Down before all their rich bounty they fling,
Free to the beggar, and free to the king;
Loving, they stoop to the lowliest ways,
Joyous, they brighten the dreariest days;
Under the fringe of their raiment they hide
Scars the gray winter had opened so wide;
    Freely and brightly.
    Who can count lightly
Gifts with such generous ardor proffered,

Tokens of love from such full hearts offered;
Or look without passion of joy and delight
At pastures, star covered from morning till night,
When the sunshiny field ablaze is
With daisies.

Daisies!
Your praise is
That you are like maidens, as maidens should be,
Winsome in freshness and wholesome to see;
Gifted with beauty and joy to the eye;
Head lifted daintily, yet not too high;
Sweet with humility; radiant in love;
Generous, too, as the sunshine above;
Swaying with sympathy, tenderly bent
On hiding the hurt, and on healing the rent;
Innocent, looking the world in the face;
Fearless, with nature's own innocent grace;
Full of sweet goodness, yet simple in art;
White in the soul and pure gold in the heart;
Ah! like unto you should all maidenhood be,
Gladsome to know and most gracious to see, —
Like you, my daisies!

A BIRTHDAY.

A SCORE of years! O child beloved and fair,
Since thy glad pinions in swift upward flight
Darkened for us the rosy morning light,
And earth grew empty, — for thou wert not there.

A score of years! At manhood's threshold stand
The little ones who touched with bated breath
Thy lips all pallid from the kiss of death,
The frozen beauty of thy dimpled hand.

But thee, nor time nor change can rude assail;
Upon thy face the baby smile doth rest,
The fadeless lilies shine upon thy breast,
And on thy brow a glory rare and pale.

O wondrous Death! thou dealest sharpest pain!
More swift than life thou snatchest youth away;
But while life farther bears it, day by day,
Thy hand, grown kind, doth give it back again!

TWO FESTIVALS.

When in the June time nature woke
To sunshine and joy and sweet surrender,
Fragance of bloom on the orchard slope,
Passion of love in the roses' splendor,
Wooed by the voices of bird and of bee,
Whisper of tree-tops and murmur of sea,
Earth the maid became Earth the wife;
Gayly she married her bridegroom Life, —
And the green leaves danced at the wedding.

Now in the dull November day
Sunshine and song have flown together,
The rose is dead, and the bird away
In far lands seeking the golden weather;
With clashing of boughs in the windy lane,
With sigh of the wind and sob of the rain,
Wrinkled and gray and scant o' breath,
The widowed Earth marries her bridegroom
Death, —
And the dead leaves dance at the wedding.

THE DARK O' THE YEAR.

Aye, but the day is dour, lad,
  Wi' the chill wind moanin' by;
Snaw on the fell an' moor, lad,
  Snaw in the cauld, gray sky;
Short is the sun's dim shinin',
  Lang is the darksome night,
Wi' the sheeverin dawn from its bosom blawn,
  Like a wraith thro' the gruesome night!

'T is a time o' trouble an' dearth, lad,
  Cauld is the sun's warm breath,
And the guid brown cheek o' the airth, lad,
  Is wan wi' the white o' death.
There 's never a song in the bushes,
  There 's never a lilt in the breeze,
An' the greetin' rain, like a soul in pain,
  Gaes sobbin' amang the trees.

But the fire on the hearth is high, lad,
  An' the ingle nook is warm;

There 's a promise o' springtime nigh, lad,
To brighten the darkest storm.
'T is little we heed its skelpin',
When the heart is gay within,
For the auld heads bent in a fine content,
An' the laughin' bairnies' din.

They ca' it the dark o' the year, lad,
But little they know who speak!
When the speerit is glad an' clear, lad,
Wha cares if the land be bleak?
But I could tell of a dawnin',
As fair as the smile o' God;
When the hawthorn spray for the brow o' the May
Was glintin' above the sod,

When the lark like an arrow o' song, lad,
Was piercin' the dazzle o' sky,
An' the sweet air sparklin' an' strong, lad,
Laughed low as it floated by,
An' a dead face there in the corner,
Changed a' life's glory to fear, —
O wae be the day! And wae be the day!
For that was the dark o' the year!

SPRING'S AWAKING.

The wind is chill in the street;
As it sighs, the bare boughs fret;
Grime of the mire and the wet
Hinder the weary feet;
But high in the purer air,—
High as the heart's desire—
In a passion of longing and fire
A bird sings sweet and fair,—
While a sunbeam, cheery and strong,
Answers the joy of the song,
And Spring is coming.

Soul, thou art sore distrest!
By grief and the shadow of death,
By cold of the winter's breath,
Still is thy pulse opprest!
Lift up thine eyes to see,
Lift up thine ears to hear,—
For the spirit of life is near

And its voice is calling to thee.
Over the graveyard sod
Shineth the smile of God,
And Spring is coming.

AT A NAMELESS SOLDIER'S GRAVE.

Unto the unknown dead!
Unto each honored head
Soft pillowed now in peacefulness most deep,
That maketh holy ground where'er they sleep;
Above whose rest the loving south winds hover,
And bees hum loud amid the brave red clover;
Who for their country fought,
Loyal in heart and thought
However led by alien force astray,
Weave we a wreath to-day.

Fame hath its trumpet tone
For names long made its own;
Poets have sung and kindly eyes bewept
The golden promise from earth's harvest swept
Ere yet the grain had ripened, and the calm
Of well-won peace distilled its holy balm.
But for the unknown host,
None hath made plaint or boast,
Who in the depth of war's ensanguined flood,
Found their baptism of blood.

Yet did their strong arms hold
Treasure more dear than gold
For the fair land on which their true hearts shed
Joy, love, and life, that she might lift her head.
In her rich coffers shines no purer gem
Than the brave faith that nerved and strengthened them,
When in her anguish torn,
Stricken and all forlorn,
From her deep need she gave that bitter cry
And they came forth, — to die.

Nor in the glorious way
Waiting her feet to-day, —
Robed in white honor, proved among her peers,
Guarded in peace more strong than sword and spears, —
Let from her grateful memory be cast
The nameless heroes of her golden past,
Whose bones on many a field forgotten lie
Under the summer sky.

But as they make more fair
The brave earth smiling there,

Joyous with life and rich in happy bloom,
So in our souls their spirits shall find room
With all glad thought of worth and high renown,
Of love, and trust, and lofty honor's crown,
Of freedom's kindling breath,
Of strength that conquers death, —
The while we sing with proud uplifted head
Unto the Unknown Dead!

A LITANY OF FLOWERS.[1]

O Flower of Faith! Thou Passion bloom upspringing
Amid the dust of lowliness and pain,
The joy of life to death and sadness bringing,
Our eyes are dim; make thou the pathway plain.

O Flower of Hope! Fair Lily of the garden,
Whose leaves no touch of soil or time can fret,
Of Heaven's dear peace the sentinel and warden,
Let thy light shine above earth's vague regret.

O Flower of Love! Red Rose, whose mystic beauty
Hath so made glad our fallen nature's state,
Lend thy sweet breath to teach the bliss of duty,
And lift our souls to where His glories wait.

[1] Feast of the Annunciation.

WENDELL PHILLIPS.

Glory, not grief, our theme to-day!
The record of his life to sing
Who brought to clothe our common clay
The royal mantle of the king.
Glory, not grief! The heart is cold
That drinks of sorrow's bitter cup,
When like the prophet saint of old,
God's fiery steeds bear heroes up.

Some tombs are altars. On them flame
The beacon lights of sacrifice,
Like stars fair set in sky of fame
To light the way for seeking eyes.
Beside them lie the conqueror's bays,
The patriot's sword, the poet's pen,
Like kindling sparks to set ablaze
The fire divine in hearts of men.

Round thy dear name, O thou most blessed
Because most loved! what memories throng
Now that thy virtues stand confessed,
By death's pale light made doubly strong.

Thou Bayard of our craven age!
When even honor stoops to greed,
How fair the white, unsullied page
Thy record leaves for man to read!

Born in the purple; placed beyond
The cares that lowlier fortune bears,
What wiser insight, deep and fond,
Led thee to mate thy life with theirs?
Thy soul was like an angel's wing
To stir the troubled pool of doubt,
Till Bondage, bathing in the spring,
Drew healing grace of Freedom out.

Twofold thy nature: one was shown
To those oppressed of creed or race,
Who knew thy tenderness alone,
And saw the Saviour in thy face;
While one, in stern and awful guise,
Confronted the embattled throng,
And with the lightning of thine eyes
Struck down the armored might of wrong.

If, sometime, on the upward track,
When frosty peril nipped the soul
And Prudence called her warriors back,
Thy braver spirit stormed the goal,

Smote giant Danger, branch and root,
And spurred thy lagging comrades on, —
Shall we, who share the victory's fruit,
Dare question how the heights were won?

The wingèd arrows of thy speech,
Barbed with sharp point of finest scorn,
That tore their way through gap and breach,
And forced a path for hopes forlorn;
The broken fetter of the slave,
The right of manhood to be free —
What nobler signs could make thy grave
A sacred shrine to Liberty?

On thy dead brow we place the crown,
For words made living by thy breath;
For fearless thought; for high renown
Of conquest from the jaws of death;
For this is Fame! But to thy bier
Come gifts, all other gifts above, —
The freedman's prayer, the poor man's tear,
The Nation's stricken cry of love!

1884.

HOW IRELAND ANSWERED.

A TRADITION OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

WHERESOE'ER in song or story
Runs one theme of ancient glory,
Wheresoe'er in word or action lives one spark for freedom's shrine,
Read it out before the people,
Ring it loud in street and steeple,
Till the hearts of those who listen thrill beneath its power divine!

And as lives immortal, gracious,
The great deed of young Horatius,
Or that gauntlet of defiance flung by Tell in Gessler's face,
So for him who claims as sireland
The green hills of holy Ireland,
Let the speech of old John Parnell speak its lesson to his race.

'T was in days when sore tormenting
With a malice unrelenting,
England pushed her youngest step-child past endurance into strife;
Till, with weak, frail hands uplifted,
With but hate and courage gifted,
She began the desperate struggle that should end in death or life.

Came the fourth long year of fighting;
Want and woe and famine biting
Nipped the heartstrings of the "Rebels," chilled their pulse with cold despair;
Southern swamp and Northern mountain
Fed full streams to war's red fountain,
And the gloom of hopeless struggle darkened all the heavy air;

Lincoln's troops in wild disorder
Beaten on the Georgian border;
Fivescore craft off Norfolk harbor scuttled deep beneath the tide;
Hessian thieves in swaggering sallies
Raiding fair New England valleys;
While before Savannah's trenches brave Pulaski, fighting, died;

Indian allies warwhoops raising
Where Wyoming's roofs were blazing;
Clinton, full of pomp and bluster, sailing down on Charleston;
And the people faint with striving,
Worn with aimless, poor contriving,
Tired at last of freedom's battle, heedless if 't is lost or won.

Shall now England pause for mercy
When the frozen plains of Jersey,
Tracked with blood, showed pathways trodden by bare feet of wounded men?
When the drained and tortured nation
Holds no longer gold or ration
To upbuild her fallen fortune, or to fill her veins again?

Nay! but striving swift and surely
Now to gain the end securely,
Stirling asks for reinforcements — volunteers to speed the cause;
And King George in mandate royal
Speeds amid his subjects loyal,
Calls for dutiful assistance to avenge his outraged laws.

In the name of law and order
Sends across the Irish border
To the wild and reckless spirits of whose daring well he knows:
"Ho! brave fools who fight for pleasure,
Here is chance for fame and treasure;
Teach those brazen Yankee devils the full force of Irish blows!"

Old John Parnell, cool and quiet, —
Strange result on Celtic diet, —
Colonel he of volunteers and well belovèd chief of men,
Reads the royal proclamation,
Answers for himself and nation —
Ye who heed the voice of honor list the ringing words again: —

"Still, as in her ancient story,
Ireland fights for right and glory;
Still her sons, through blood and danger, hold unstained their old renown;
But, by God who reigneth o'er me,
By the motherland that bore me,
Never Irish gold or valor helps to strike a patriot down!"

Thus 'mid themes immortal, gracious,
Like that deed of young Horatius
Or the gauntlet of defiance flung by Tell in Gessler's face,
Let the Celt who claims as sireland
The green hills of holy Ireland
Place the speech of old John Parnell for the glory of his race.

DECORATION DAY.

WHERE is the Winter's scath?
Where is the pain and wrath
That scarred the earth with ruin and with blight,
That wove its icy pall round day and night?
Gone! as the swiftly moving grace of Summer
Casts its fair shadow, luminous and sweet,
While Nature, blithe to greet the jocund comer,
Bursts into bloom before her welcome feet.

Where be our loved and lost?
Where are the tempest-tossed
Souls of the brave, that passion's fiery breath
Scorched on the battlefields of war and death?
Gone! And above their place a lasting glory
Of shining deeds, a high, heroic part

Written in light across their country's story,
Written in love upon their country's heart.

Shall the glad days return?
Shall the gray valleys burn
With the fresh fires of resurrection, blown
Downward with living breath from God's high throne,
And our dead heroes, in cold silence sleeping,
Wake to no pulse of life, no heavenly powers
That, with the spirit's strength all bounds o'erleaping,
Shall reach from their more glorious world to ours?

Nay! when we come to-day
Laden with blooms of May,
Crowning with music's breath and voice of song
The graves that to their quiet rest belong,
Is it not theirs, this mood of inspiration
That lifts in prayer and praise each reverent head,
While, proudly sad, the Genius of the Nation
Kneels by the honored ashes of her dead?

Seasons shall ebb and flow,
Kingdoms shall come and go,
  Through the long cycles of the years to come,
  Ere the deep echoes of their fame be dumb.
Still in the fertile soil of true hearts growing
  Their seed shall bourgeon for the day of need;
And the strong impulse from their lives upflowing
  Still force its way to golden thought and deed.

From their mute lips arise
Strains that do scale the skies:
  The might of Love, that freely ventured all
  When awful Duty thrilled her trumpet-call;
Patience, in pain that burned the dross from merit;
  Faith, in the heart when earthly hope grew dim;
Death, as a choice, that we might life inherit, —
  Such are the themes of their immortal hymn.

Fair is the thought, and just,
That to their sacred dust
Leads year by year in pious pilgrimage
The blended ranks of childhood and of age,
The grace of woman, bright with love's own splendor,
The strength of manhood in its lusty prime,
Moved by one impulse, generous and tender,
To hold their memories green through circling time.

Country, or rank, or name,
Naught do we ask of Fame.
Whether they called themselves of North or South,
Since naught they asked who faced the cannon's mouth,
Since on both sides the patriot heart beat kindly,
Since on both sides the balm of death did fall,
Forgive the brothers' hands uplifted blindly,
And with the love of brothers crown them all.

WOMEN OF THE REVOLUTION.

Heart of the patriot, touched by freedom's
kindling breath,
Pouring its burning words from lips by passion
fired;
Sword of the soldier, drawn in the awful face
of death;
Bounteous pen of the scholar, tracing its theme
inspired;
Wealth of the rich man's coffers, help of the
poor man's dole;
Strength of the sturdy arm, and might of the
statesman's fame, —
These be fit themes for praise in days that
tried the soul,
But where in the list is room for mention of
woman's name?

For hers are the virtues cast in finer and
gentler mould;
In quiet and peaceful paths, her nature finds
its scope.

Stronger in loving than hating; fond where
the man is bold,
She works with the tools of patience and won-
derful gifts of hope.
Hers are the lips that kiss, the hands that
nurse and heal,
The tender voice that speaks in accents low
and sweet.
What hath her life to do with clash of musket
and steel,
Who sits at the gate of home, with children
about her feet?

Nay! in the sturdy tree is there one sap at
the root
That mounts to the stately trunk to fill it with
power and pride,
And one for the tender branch that bourgeons
in flower and fruit,
Casting its welcome shadow on all that rest
beside?
Nay! when the man is called, the woman must
swift arise,
Ready to strengthen and bless, ready to follow
and wait,

Ready to crush in her heart the anguish of tears and sighs,
Reading the message of God in the blind decrees of Fate.

So, in the days of the past, when Liberty raised her voice,
Weak as a new-born babe in the cradle who wakes and calls,
And the tremulous accents ran through the beautiful land of her choice,
As into the heart of the mother the cry of her infant falls, —
So did hand of the woman reach to hand of the man,
Helping with comfort and love, steeling his own for the strife;
Till the calm of her steadfast soul through his wavering pulses ran,
And the blow of the husband's arm was nerved from the heart of the wife.

Wearing a homespun gown, or ruling with easy sway
The world of fashion and pride, gilded by fortune's sun,

Rich or poor, who asks, as the record we
read to-day?
Lowly or great, who cares how the poor dis-
tinctions run?
Hallowed be every name in the roll of honor
and fame,
Since on hearthstone and field they kindled
the sacred fire,
Since with fostering breath they nurtured Lib-
erty's flame,
And set it aloft on the heights to which he-
roes' feet aspire.

Molly of Monmouth, staunch in the place of
her fallen brave,
Drowning the cry of defeat in the lusty roar of
her gun;
Rebecca, the Lady of Buckhead, who, eager for
freedom, gave
Home of her heart to the burning, and smiled
when the work was done;
Abigail Adams of Quincy, noble of soul and
race,
Reader of men and books, wielder of distaff
and pen;

Martha Wilson of Jersey, moving with courtly grace;
Deborah Samson, fighting side by side with the men;

Frances Allen, the Tory, choosing the better part,
Led by Ethan the daring to follow his glorious way;
Elizabeth Zane of Wheeling, timid, yet strong of heart,
Bearing her burden of powder through smoke and flame of the fray;—
Each on the endless list, through length and breadth of the land,
Winning her deathless place on the golden scroll of Time,
Fair as in old Greek days the women of Sparta stand
Linked with the heroes' fame and sharing their deeds sublime.

Stronger than we of to-day in nerve and muscle and will,
Braver than we of to-day the burden of women to bear,

Glad from their wholesome breasts soft mouths of children to fill,
Holding the crown of the mother as highest that woman could wear;
Asking no larger sphere than that in which bravely shine
Sunshine of home and heart, stars of duty and love;
Full of a purer faith that rested in Trust divine,
And lifted their simple lives to glory of Heaven above;

Plain of speech and of dress, as fitted their age and place;
Meet companions for men of sterner creed and frame,
Yet knowing the worth of a word, and fair with that old-time grace
That perfumes like breath of a flower the page that holds their name.
Trained within closer bounds to question issue and cause, —
Small the reach of their thought to the modern student looks;

But the stream within narrower banks runs deeper by Nature's laws,
And theirs was a wiser lore than the shallow knowledge of books.

Not in the Forum's seat and aping the wrangler's course
Did they strive with barbèd word the target of right to reach;
But moulding the will of their kind with eloquent, silent force,
Stronger than sting of the pen, louder than clamor of speech,
Honor, they taught, and right, and noble courage of truth,
Strength to suffer and bear in holy Liberty's need;
Framing through turbulent years and fiery season of youth
Soul for the valor of thought, hand for the valor of deed.

Well that with praise of the brave song of their triumph should blend!
Well that in joy of the land fame of their glory find part!

For theirs is the tone of the chord that holds
its full strength to the end,
When music that dies to the ear yet lingers
and sings in the heart.
Letter and word may fade but still the spirit
survives,
Rounding in ages unborn each frail distorted
plan;
And fittest survival is this, when souls of
mothers and wives
Bloom in immortal deeds, through life of child
and man!

FOR THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHARITABLE IRISH SOCIETY.

Spirit of Charity! Angel of Might!
Lift up our souls to the glory of light!
Crown of the conqueror! Hope of the weak!
Thine is the homage our full hearts would speak.

Thou, too, O Native Land! Thou whose dear name
Pale hand of sorrow hath wedded to fame,
List to the sons of thy tear-sprinkled sod,
Blending the love of their country and God!

Erin, Beloved! What might was in thee,
When thy children were swept like the leaves from the tree,
To move the sad hearts that in exile had flown
To pity for sorrows more deep than their own?

Gift of rare grace didst thou hold from above,
Strengthening thine own for their labor of love;
Teaching them, friendless, in trial to lend
Strong hands of help for the need of a friend.

Hymn we the triumph of mercy and grace,
Lighting the future and past of our race;
No garland fairer may honor entwine
Than charity claims for her mission divine.

Valor's proud standard still droops over graves;
Glory may thrive 'mid the groaning of slaves,
But who his brother loves — his place shall be,
O Thou Omnipotent! nearest to Thee.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

WHAT maketh Christmas bright,
Though earth be dreary?
Truly I think 't is so
Because God's angels know
The rosy dawn is near to chase the night,
And rest to soothe the weary.

What maketh Christmas gay,
Though heart be sorry?
Nay but I think because
The star of glory draws
Man's soul above, beyond the stormy way
Of earthly care and worry!

What maketh Christmas peace,
Though rage be striving?
A hush of seraphs' wings;
A heavenly choir that sings,
Bending before the Babe that brings release
From death and sin's contriving!

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.

I.

O FRIEND, withdrawn too soon from love and
fame!
When on the peace of this fair Sabbath morn,
Marring its joy with discord most forlorn,
The priest's low voice did utter thy dear name,
And ask that light perpetual might shine
On those closed eyes of thine, —
So sudden shut to all the warmth and glow
Of glad, strong life below —
Surely thy sturdy spirit must have known
The wail that ran through all the people, prone
Before the altar, on low bended knee,
In prayer and tears for thee!

II.

Red rose and white, the laurel and the rue,
Shall blend in wreath for you;
For the brave spirit, buoyant, unafraid
That ever rose its brother man to aid

In strife against the tyrant; and to lift
The poorest life to reach of freedom's gift.
But not the proudest bloom
They place upon thy tomb
Can touch thy loyal soul as this long moan
Slow wrung from hearts which claimed thee as
their own.

III.

Not for thyself we weep —
Too early fallen asleep,
Before the dust and footsore of gray time
Had wearied thee, and dimmed day's golden
prime.
For thou hast won the race
Where longer lives do vainly sue for place;
And evermore thy memories belong
To native land and song.
But for ourselves, who ne'er again may know
In the long years below
The hand's strong clasp, the smile so sudden
bright,
The cheery voice, the sunny eye's delight —
Alas! what use the haunting truth to flee —
'T is for thyself we grieve, and only thee!

SONNETS AND EPIGRAMS.

EASTER DAY.

THOU fairest Feast that earth may ever know!
Of all her days most beautiful and best,
Since Heaven doth open at thy glad behest,
And man, immortal, spurn the clod below.
Thou birthday of the soul! When He doth show
His costliest gift of sweet eternal rest,
Of peace and joy supernal, to the breast
That life's harsh storm doth buffet to and fro.
More gracious art thou than the blessed night
When angel choirs the hymn of praise began,
And Bethlehem's star made glad the happy sod;
For joy in thee doth soar to purer height, —
Since greater than the bliss of God made Man
Is thine, which hails again the Man made God.

RAIN IN THE MOUNTAINS.

All day above the valley's circle fair, —
  While in the fields the broken grasses bowed
  Beneath the gray mist falling like a shroud, —
Titans of earth fight titans of the air.
Against the swarth browed mountains, gaunt and bare,
  The countless, formless squadrons of dark cloud
  Charge and retreat with crash of thunder loud,
And, baffled, still the shock of onset dare.
Now from the heights they win their stormy way,
  Above the rocky walls their banners stream;
And in the twilight of defeated day
  Torn by the lightning's sharp and fitful gleam, —
I stand, with all beneath in ruin hurled,
On one lone peak above a buried world.

ISABELLA OF CASTILE.

BORN APRIL 23, 1451.

I.

In that strange, steadfast light which men call fame,
That backward through the halls of time doth flow,
Piercing the shadows of the past to show
The splendid ghosts of glory and of shame,
One figure shines resplendent; the white flame
Of centuries crowns the regal brow we know,
The hands outstretched with jewels, and the glow
That rests for aye on Isabella's name.
Lo! where she waits; with high prophetic glance
Bent like a star above the stormy main,
The queenliest queen that dwells in old romance,
The proudest gem that decks the crown of Spain;

Whose lustre over sea and land hath flown
To this new world which she did make her own.

II.

Around her move the dull and restless throng
Of narrow lives; the fierce and sordid race,
With visions lowered from that loftier space
Which makes the earth more glad than light or song;
The poor ambitions and the might of wrong;
The craven fear that doubts the future's grace.
While she, as one uplifted for a space,
Stands like a vision, beautiful and strong.
Dear doth man hold her for the zeal inspired
That sped Columbus to his happy goal.
But dearer that the might of virtue fired
With such hot flame her pure and noble soul,
That in its light the fairest life is shown,
Her sex, her country, and her faith have known.

IN MID OCEAN.

Here surely yet the gods of old remain!
Lo! Dian moves across the fields of air
Calm visaged, pure, the crescent in her hair;
Bright Venus too doth hold her joyous reign,
Born of the rosy foam that dyes the main
As Hesperus doth call the winds to prayer.
And here where sea and sky do blend most fair
Poseidon comes with all his lusty train;
His plumy coursers, dashing through the night
Do strike strange fires beneath each flying heel,
As, white manes loose in swift imperious flight,
All soundless through the realms of space they wheel;
And far along the murmuring wave is borne
The deep melodious music of his horn.

A BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY.

THE glorious movement heaven-aspiring flies,
Through the rapt silence of the listening hall;
Fades from our sight the stern encircling wall
And dreamland opens to our dreaming eyes.
Forgotten hopes and lost ambitions rise
To shake the soul with happy longing. All
Triumphant fancies hold the heart in thrall;
The future brightens under smiling skies.
And thou, O Master! On whose mighty brow
The waves of thine own harmonies do break,
High rising through the golden orbéd spheres
Like billows round some stately vessel's prow, —
Do they no echo to thine ears awake,
That reaches where thy listening spirit hears?

PALM SUNDAY AT SEA.

It was the land that did Thee such despite
O Christ, our Lord! that welcomed Thee with palms,
With loud hosannahs, and glad ringing psalms,
Then sudden swept Thee on to Calvary's height!

Not thus disloyal was Thy constant sea;
That still doth hymn Thy glory and Thy praise
As in the dawn of fair creation's days,
And render unchecked homage unto Thee.

That still doth sing Thy all embracing sway;
Unto the silent watches of the stars,
And morn fresh burst from out its silver bars,
Proclaiming Thy glad power from day to day,
And naming Thee the God whom we adore,
Who is, and was, and shall be, evermore.

NOVEMBER.

To-day, amid the sobbing of the rain —
While pale November with gaunt finger-tips
Proffers the cup of doom to Nature's lips
And, scowling, mocks her moan of bitter pain —

I cannot mark the strife 'twixt life and death
For joy of one fair thought that dwells with me;
A sunny hillside sleeping by the sea,
Made glad with bloom, and song-birds' voiceful breath.

Glad as a dream that fills a stormy night
With peace and love, it stirs my waking hours
With blue waves dancing in the golden light,
With brown bees dipping deep in chaliced flowers,.
And one swift flight of swallows drifting by,
Blown like a cloud across a summer sky.

JUSTIN McCARTHY.

To most men Fortune grants a single boon,
And looks upon her kindly task as done,
Since, by such wealth, the prize of life is won,
And Fame's bright garland cometh late or soon.

But here is one whose happier lot hath known
A fourfold gift, to make his fellows rich
In thought and deed strung to high Honor's pitch.
For he to Fancy's fairy realm hath flown,

And won his knighthood; he hath plucked the truth
From History's masking, and laid bare her face;
Renown hath found him in the Statesman's place;
The Patriot's heart is his in age as youth;
Choose for his wreath — and bid the emblem stand —
The four-leafed Shamrock of his native land!

TO ONE BELOVED.

I WILL not wish thee wealth, since wealth may bring
But empty pleasure, false and hollow joys
O'ertopping peace with rude and empty noise,
Till life shall droop like bird on broken wing;

Nor will I ask for years, since time may be
A thing beyond all other strangely sad,
A cursed gift to make men drunk or mad,
With sordid care and pressing misery;

But I would crave for thee a rarer boon;
A spirit tuned to such serene accord
— As one of those beloved of the Lord —
That nought of all that cometh, late or soon,
Be it of life or death, of joy or dole,
Can fret the calm of thy most constant soul.

THE GIFT OF VISION.

"Once, in the dark, I knew a rose was near,
Because her lips had kissed the summer air
And left their haunting perfume floating there.
But when I fain would pluck it for my dear,

Lo! nought of all its sweet could I attain,
But in its stead sharp thorns that sore did fret
My eager hands, and force them to forget
Their loving quest for smart and bitter pain.

Shall I then cheat my fancy with the thought
No flower was there within the prickly space,
To add its lustre to my lady's grace,
Or give me the fair prize my longing sought?
Nay! for behind its thorn the rose must be,
If we, who search so blindly, could but see!"

MORNING IN THE CITY.

A PALE blue sky, suffused with tender light;
A chirp of sparrows underneath tall eaves;
A veiling mist of newly budded leaves
That softly screen the city's homes from sight;

A subtle incense in the quiet air,
Which so uplifts the sense of common things
That life soars upward as if borne on wings,
And every thought becomes a silent prayer.

O promise fairer than the perfect day
Of golden summer! Thou divine unrest
That meets its twin desire in every breast
This happy morning! Teach our lives the way
To learn of thee thy secret sweet and old,
The Midas touch that turns all dross to gold.

HOSTAGES.

All men must pay some ransom unto Fate
For this strange boon of living. Blest is he
Who with some loss of gold or land goes free;
Nor yet unhappy is his fair estate
On whom kind death most tenderly doth wait
To take his treasure. Larger swells the fee
He pays to Fortune, from whom love doth flee,
Or change unto the scowling face of hate.
More sad than these, his darkly mournful lot
Whose hand the clasp of friendship hath forgot;
But deadliest price of all the soul must pay,
Which for some lure of earthly power or pride
Hath cast its heritage of heaven aside,
And for such gaud hath given itself away.

NANTASKET.

O THOU more fair than fairer scenes to me!
Where the long curve of silver shining sand,
Like some slim arm stretched outward from the land,
Doth woo the soft embracing of the sea.
Where green hills lift their sunny uplands free
Above the tall white cliffs, that faithful stand
As sentinels to guard the virgin strand
In lonely, lonesome beauty! Graciously
About thee dreams of love and peace do lie;
Of bright days passed in sweet enduring rest;
Of happy thought, no wave of grief hath drowned;
Outside, the winter's stormy wings may fly,
But never droop their shadow on thy breast,
O golden shore! with fadeless summer crowned.

IN ANSWER.

DEAREST my love! You ask me which were best:
Thus to be torn by such sharp lance of pain
As rends two lives which may not meet again,
Or never to have tasted love's unrest,
— That woful gladness burning in the breast
Which sweeter is than all earth's richer gain.
What need to question, while there doth remain
A single thought to do the heart's behest.
Is earth so wide we cannot bridge its space?
Is heaven so high we cannot scale its bars
And hold our fond communion face to face
Beyond the silent portal of the stars?
This is proud grief. But O the famished heart!
The poor, pale joy, had we two dwelt apart!

SALVE!

THOU pulse of joy! whose throb beats time
For daisied field, for blossoming spray,
Set all the prose of life to rhyme!
To dance of leaf, and song-bird's chime
Ring in the May!

CONTRADICTION.

The flush of rage was on her cheek,
And scorn flashed lightning from her eye, —
But trembling lips refused to speak,
And love, though mute, gave wrath the lie.

SEQUENCE.

THERE 's not a breath of Summer's joy and glory
But whispers of the Autumn twilight near;
There 's not a page of Winter's saddest story
But turns to meet the dawning of the year.
Thus fear doth wait on hope and hope on fear.

KISMET.

In golden lands of sunshine and of love,
One sported, glad as bright-winged birds in flight;
From furrowed seas, while storm winds crashed above,
One lifted hopeless eyes to meet the night.

Lo! how the gods do cheat our human powers
Of skill to read the future from the past!
Death, like a serpent, bit among the flowers,
Life rode triumphant on the whirlwind's blast!

AT THE CHILDREN'S HOUR.

THE LITTLE SAILOR KISS.

O kisses they are plenty
As blossoms on the tree!
And be they one or twenty
They 're sweet to you and me;
And some are for the forehead, and some are for the lips,
And some are for the rosy cheeks, and some for finger-tips,
And some are for the dimples, — but the sweetest one is this,
When the bonny, bonny bairnie gives his little sailor kiss!

O I will kiss this sailor,
This sailor lad so true!
I would not kiss a nailer,
A carpenter, or tailor,
But I will kiss this sailor
With bonny eyes of blue;
With a sonsy smile and yellow hair to snare the sunshine in,

With a laughing mouth, and a rosy cheek, and
a dimple in the chin;
Three years old, and a heart of gold — Ah!
who would care to miss
The chance to meet my darling with his little
sailor kiss.

For then the tiny fingers
Creep, pinching, to your face
With a touch that thrills and lingers;
And the rosy palms find place
To come pressing and caressing with soft and
gentle touch,
Not teasing you too little, and yet not over
much,
While full of love and laughter the pretty blue
eyes glow
And red lips tightly puckered pout roguishly
below.
O tell me, ye who know it, is there in the
world such bliss,
As when the bonny bairnie gives his little
sailor kiss!

THE NAME OF MARY.

MARY, we dared to call our little maid
Because upon the Virgin's day she came;
O Gracious Mother! lend thy holy aid
To give her life the beauty of her name!

A SONG WITHOUT WORDS.

"PLAY us a tune," cried the children:
"Something merry and sweet
Like birds that sing in the summer;
Or nodding tips o' the wheat
Dancing across the meadows
While the warm sun burns and glows, —
Till we fancy we smell in Winter
The breath of a sweet June rose."

"Play us a tune," said the Mother:
"Something tender and low,
Like a thought that comes in the Autumn
When leaves are ready to go;
When the fire on the hearth is lighted,
And we know not which is best —
The long bright evenings coming,
Or the long bright days at rest."

And the dear little artist bending
Over the swaying bow,
Drew tones so merry and gladsome
And tones so soft and low

That we scarce could tell, who listened,
Which song had the sweetest words, —
The one that sang of the fireside,
Or the one that sang of the birds.

HELD IN SIGHT.

Far down the long and busy street
A little form appears,
So small as yet no eye may trace
The features of the darling face,
Bright with its six glad years.

No eye save mine, that keen with love
Speeds forth its mark to find;
Unswerved by tumult deep and loud,
By hurrying feet and surging crowd,
That well its search might blind.

Clearly, as if it stood alone
Upon some wind-swept lea,
Or lifted boldly into sight
Above the crest of some brave height,
The dear wee shape I see.

Unknown, unmarked amid the throng,
His absence who would note?
Yet sun and moon and stars in flight

Less dark would leave the black, blind night
  Above sad earth to float, —

Than on my soul the shade would fall,
  If two small pattering feet
That on the crowded pathway stray,
Should sudden droop and turn away,
  From out life's busy street.

Dear God! when sometimes fears oppress
  Lest Thy keen glance decline
Its search for some poor, drifting soul, —
The doubt forgive, the fear control;
  Is our love more than Thine?

THE FIRST STEP.

To-night as the tender gloaming
Was sinking in evening's gloom,
And only the glow of the firelight
Brightened the dark'ning room,
I laughed with the gay heart-gladness
That only to mothers is known,
For the beautiful brown-eyed baby
Took his first step alone.

Hurriedly running to meet him
Came trooping the household band,
Joyous, loving, and eager
To reach him a helping hand;
To watch him in silent rapture,
To cheer him with happy noise,
My one little fair-faced daughter
And four brown romping boys.

Leaving the sheltering arms
That fain would bid him rest
Close to the love and the longing,
Near to the mother's breast,

Wild with laughter and daring,
Gleefully flying from me,
He stumbled across through the shadows
To rest at his father's knee.

Baby, my dainty darling,
Stepping so brave and bright
With flutter of lace and ribbon
Out of my arms to-night,
Helped in thy pretty ambition
With tenderness blessed to see,
Sheltered, upheld, and protected, —
How will the last step be?

See, we are all beside you,
Urging and beckoning on;
Watching lest aught betide you
Till the safe near goal is won;
Guiding the faltering footsteps
That tremble and fear to fall, —
How will it be, my darling,
With the last sad step of all?

Nay! Shall we dare to question;
Knowing that One more fond
Than all our tenderest loving,
Will guide the weak feet beyond!

And knowing beside, my dearest,
That whenever the summons, 't will be
But a stumbling step through the shadow,
Then rest — at the Father's knee.

TO A LITTLE LAD.

Hey Niddy Noddy!
What is this I see!
Vowing he is no' for bed,
Tho' his bonny drowsy head
Tosses up an' tosses down
Like a ship at sea!
Winking an' blinking
Eyes in shadow creep,
Straying an' playing
Hide an' seek wi' sleep;
Whiles the flying laughter slips
Up his face astray;
Whiles the dimples round the lips
Fleet and fly away;
Not a notion gude or bad
Is in that curly head, —
Hoot! my little silly lad
Off wi' ye to bed!

Ho Niddy Noddy!
And are ye waking yet!

Sitting there without a word,
Gaping like a hungry bird,
Is na that a weary sight
To make a body fret?
Mundering an' blundering
Along his sleepy way,
Lowering an' glowering
Wi' nought at all to say;
Daur ye now to tell a fib!
Say it is na late,
Wi' yon little lonesome crib,
Waiting for its mate;
Mickle sense, or good or bad,
Is in that curly head;
But an' ye 'd mak it more, my lad,
Off wi' ye to bed!

THE WEE THING!

Oh! Bairnies hae I mony
That rin aboot the hause;
An' ane is fair an' gentle,
Saft steppit as a mause —
An' ane is bauld and bonnie,
Wi' blue een glintin' braw;
But the sonsy, stumblin' wee thing
Is dearest o' them a'!

'T is weel I loe my Jessie,
Puir bud sae douce and sweet, —
Wi' smile that maks me gladsome,
An' voice that gars me greet!
An' weel I loe blithe Donald,
An' Jack so gey an sma' —
But the hirplin, toddlin' wee thing
Is dearest o' them a'!

There 's Sandy straught an' winsome,
Sae strappin' for his age,
Fu' taller than the gudeman,
An' airnin' manly wage, —

Eh! but the tears do bleer my een
When on his face they fa'—
But still that fechless wee thing
Is dearest o' them a'!

I daurna think it ower
For fear it wad be sin;
I daurna let the lips spak oot
The thocht that bides within;
I pray the Lord baith nicht an' morn,
That gude may each befa',
But the pray'r that names my wee thing
Is the pray'r that leads them a'!

LOST.

Lost! Lost! Lost!
A baby with soft brown hair,
  Dimpled and fair as a rose,
  From crown of his head to his toes
Lovely beyond compare;
White was his gown and sweet,
  With a beautiful sash of red,
The loveliest shoes on his feet,
  The loveliest hat on his head;
And such a glow on his cheek,
Like a maple leaf touched with frost, —
No wonder my heart grows weak
When I think of the baby I lost!

Lost! Lost! Lost!
O surely some one must know
  To what land sunny and bright
  Glowing with love and delight
The dear lost babies go!
If it were not fair to see,
  Full to the brim with joy,

Do you think he would stay from me,
My beautiful baby boy;
Or that all the others would go,
Like leaves by the winter tossed,
From the mothers who loved them so
To the land of the babies lost!

Lost! Lost! Lost!
They have left me here in his place
A boy with a trousers new,
And a jersey jacket of blue,
And a dear little peach bloom face.
He 's brave and bonny and brown;
He 's swift as the wind, and tall;
He can run all over the town;
He owns a bat and a ball;
He has a pocket and knife;
He can talk when his will is crossed, —
I love him as much as my life,
But — I want the baby I lost!

THE FIRST BATTLE.

Beneath the sunshine of his eyes,
A fine resolve is glinting;
A frown across the smooth brow lies,
Of strife and courage hinting.

For face to face to-day have met,
In unfamiliar courses,
The strange, mysterious alphabet,
And my small hero's forces.

He looks; he strives; a puzzled pain
Amid the dimples showing;
Then tugs again with might and main,
— Till victory's ardor glowing

Runs up its red flag to his cheek;
Down fall the broken fetters;
And lo! with pride he cannot speak
The first three conquered letters!

Ah! winsome little hero mine!
To-day in strife enlisted,

With cheeks aglow and eyes ashine
For one small foe resisted, —

We who have grown so sadly wise,
Who smile in fond derision, —
How do we know but God's clear eyes,
From wider fields of vision,

May watch our battle fields of life
With tender, loving sweetness;
Yet read in triumph, as in strife,
The same poor incompleteness.

IN LIGHTER MOOD.

AN ENIGMA.

From the French of Nadaud.

Kind and cruel is her play,
  Fierce and gentle both is she,
Fickle as the winds astray,
  Constant as the heavens be;
Her caprices without number
  Every shape and color take,
Sometimes joyous, sometimes sombre,
  Smiles and tears together wake.
Child she is, and woman too;
  Naught more mild, or harsh, can be,
— What! you think I speak of you?
  Nay! I 'm talking of the Sea.

Now 't is troubled, now 't is calm;
  Now it soothes like song of birds;
Often angry, then like balm
  Lisping sweet and loving words.
Devil 't is and angel bright,
  Now inviting, now repelling,

Its fair face and blue eyes light
  Woo men down to death's cold dwelling;
Naught more mild, or harsh, can be,
  Wound it gives, but healing too;
— What! you think I mean the Sea?
  Dearest, nay! I speak of you!

A CHARACTER SKETCH.

She smiled, then frowned, then shook her head
And scowled beneath her lashes;
A dozen pearly tears she shed,
Then laughed in sunny flashes;
She pouted, flirted, scolded, cried, —
And still you could not blame her,
For although forty moods she tried,
Yet every one became her.

She gossiped in the sweetest words,
Like south winds that astray go;
She sang as sing the summer birds,
She shrieked like a virago;
One day she dressed in gauzy green,
The next wrapped ermine round her;
For oh! she was a saucy quean,
And so her lovers found her!

Sometimes such peace was in her glance
'T was like a dream of Sundays;

Sometimes her eyes would look askance,
As dark as stormy Mondays;
She 'd scorch you like a torrid flame,
She 'd freeze you — if you 'd let her;
For April was the lady's name,
Perchance you may have met her!

CONSTANTIA INCONSTANS.

Inconstant, did you call the maid,
  Because she turned her face away
And to your friend her smiles displayed?
Inconstant, did you call the maid?
Nay? but in constant charm arrayed
  She shines like yon revolving ray.
Inconstant, did you call the maid,
  Because she turned her face away?

WITH A SILKEN PURSE.

If this were a fairy gift, dear,
And I were a fairy too,
The purse should never be empty
The whole of the long year through.

The longest summer day, dear,
And the longest winter night,
The purse should be always heavy
And your heart be always light.

But the fairies have flown away, dear,
Alas! that the words are true,
And there's nothing to fill the silken mesh
But the gold of my love for you.

CAFÉ NOIR.

I 'd be remembered, not alone
  In those rare moments when the sense
Of the divine in her hath grown
  To thoughts all radiant and intense ;
But in that tender human mood,
  That comes alike to saint and sinner,
When homely happy thoughts intrude
    — Just after dinner.

'T is then when life is at its ease,
  The body in its softest raiment,
No pain to fret, no doubts to tease
  With thought of copy, debt, or payment,
That like her coffee, clear and strong,
  While care's dull clouds grew thin and thinner,
I 'd wish kind fate would bring me on
    — Just after dinner.

TO A VERY LEARNED LADY WITH A KNITTING BASKET.

Quoth she, — 't was in the golden haze
  Of summer time, when bees were flitting
And earth was singing roundelays, —
  Quoth she: "I fain would study knitting."

In forty tongues the girl could speak,
  Mild as she looked in sunshine sitting;
Read Spanish, Gaelic, Latin, Greek,
  But ah! she did not know her knitting.

Philosophies she 'd scampered through
  To fit her mind for fine hair splitting;
Euclid and poets both she knew;
  — How could she have forgotten knitting!

Go, little basket, to her shrine;
  Speak to her heart in accents fitting;
And let the happy task be thine
  To teach her pretty hands their knitting.

Breathe — if a Basket can — this rune:
I love her, though I thus am twitting;
And let some thought of me keep tune
With every stitch she sets in knitting.

ON A THERMOMETER.

This is not, as it seems to be,
  A simple Thermo Meter;
Its mission is for you and me
  Of nobler use and sweeter.

Perhaps in measuring Fahrenheit
  'T will frisky be and arch, dear;
Mark zero for a summer night
  And burning heat in March, dear.

But if you want the temperature
  Of something holier, higher,—
Of atmospheres more fine and pure,
  Than our poor frost and fire.—

By day or night, in sun or rain,
  'T will always tell you true, dear,
The warmth of heart between us twain,
  And my fond love for you, dear.

A CONUNDRUM.

For Philip's heart one summer bright
I saw two well-bred maidens fight
— You might not think it from their air
So blithesome, frank, and debonaire,
But I, from wisdom's dear-bought height
Could read the pretty game aright,
And oft amid their laughter light
I asked myself — "Now! dark, or fair?
Which one?

Here are his wedding cards to-night;
But ere I scan the paste-board white
I fain would try, did I but dare,
To guess what name is written there,
And read, by gift of second sight,
Which won!

WITH A FOUR-LEAFED CLOVER.

Love be true to her; Life be dear to her;
Health stay close to her; Joy draw near to her;
Fortune, find what your gifts can do for her;
Search your treasure-house through and through for her;
Follow her steps the wide world over;—
You must, for here is the Four-leafed Clover.

WITH A PICTURE OF LORELEI.

You do not sit, a smiling fate,
  Weaving a sweet but cruel song,
Watching meanwhile, till soon or late
  Your ill-starred victim floats along;
You do not weave your spells apart,
To take man's life or break man's heart,
  To torture him with hope and fear, —
  So you are not like Lorelei, dear!

Yet with those large, gray, loving eyes,
  That sometimes woo and sometimes tease,
With great heart hid in faint disguise,
  With fair hands touching ivory keys, —
In ways no words of mine can tell
You charm not wisely but too well;
  Enraptured, lost, you draw us near, —
  And so you *are* like Lorelei, dear!

PHILOSOPHY.

THE saucy wind may take my hat,
And send it rolling far and free.
I need not lose my head for that;
The saucy wind may take my hat,
I shall not run, for I 'm too fat —
Some other fool shall run for me!
The saucy wind may take my hat
And send it rolling far and free.

INDIAN SUMMER.

She should be bland and debonair,
With dark eyes full of misty splendor,
Wear jewels in her dusky hair,
And speak in accents deep and tender;
Her robes of purple and of gold
Should glad the sense of each new comer,
Her gait confess the gods of old —
This Indian summer.

Alas! she 's dressed in russet-gray!
She 's pinched and cold from toe to shoulder;
Shrewish as wench on washing day,
Her sharp breath chills the rash beholder;
A shrilling voice, a jerky walk,
A glance to make dumb men grow dumber, —
Good heavens! I 'd like to tomahawk
This Indian — summer.

A DEFINITION.

A PALIMPSEST! Yes, that 's the name
For this sweet heart of lovely Molly.
But every imprint is the same —
Another screed of love, and folly.

A PHOTOGRAPH.

She hath a smile is half divine,
So brilliant and so tender;
In dusky light her dark eyes shine
Like stars in midnight splendor;
And dusky too her falling hair,
That hides the rich cheek, glowing
With blushes such as dawn might wear
When buds of June are blowing!

She hath a form that might compare
With Hebe's fabled glory;
A step as light; a joyous air
That tells her happy story;
Her voice is sweet, but sweeter far
The soul its tones informing,
With hope to drive dull grief afar,
And love that quiets storming.

She hath a mind which hap'ly blends
Grave sense and fancies lighter;

The root of deepest musing ends
  In thought like flowers, but brighter;
Her sprightly wit doth temper cares
  With gladder touch and finer,
Till life doth trip to livelier airs,
  And leave its sombre minor.

She hath — but wherefore try to reach
  Fit emblems for her sweetness,
Or torture faint and broken speech
  To mirror her completeness!
Her name? her state? Ah! wherefore pain
  My skill in necromancy!
She dwells in my Chateau in Spain,
  She is not fact, but Fancy!

MARCH!

Hie! with your blustering!
Ho! with your flustering!
Fie on you, thinking of frighting us, March!
Scowl if you dare now,
Little we care now,
Whether you 're loving or slighting us, March!
Sure when your brow is all dark with the frown
Sullen and black, and the tears dropping down,
Knowing you well now,
Faith we can tell now,
There 's little cause to be grieving us, March.
Undher your whining
Your blue eyes are shining —
You thief of the world for deceiving us, March!

Bolder an' bolder now,
Turn the cold shoulder now,
Snowing and blowing — O shame on you, March!
But it 's your nature,
You obstinate crayture,
I 'll not be throwing the blame on you, March!

Sometimes, in spite of the wrath in your eye,
The smile on your lip gives bad temper the lie;
An' shaming the growl in your voice when you speak,
The dimples of merriment dance in your cheek, —
O but you 're cute now,
Hiding the truth now,
Cutting your capers and grieving us, March.
Scolding and pleasing,
Warming and freezing,
You thief of the world for deceiving us, March!

Up from their narrow beds,
Raising their purty heads,
Though your wet blankets you throw on them, March!
See the small posies now,
Lifting their noses now,
Sniffing the sunbeams aglow on them, March.
Mighty an' proud as the king on his throne,
There 's a sweet coaxin' way that you have of your own,
Like a play actor taking the winter's dark part,
With the smile of the summer asleep in his heart; —

So you may blow now,
Rain, hail, an' snow now,
Little your tricks will be grieving us, March!
We know your way now,
Sure it 's all play now,
You thief of the world for deceiving us, March!

A GROUP OF MEXICAN POEMS.

GUADALUPE.

Once Cupid's eyes were clear,
  Open and kind,
But alas! *you*, my dear,
  He chanced to find;
Only one glance he gave, —
Since then, who paints the knave
  Must paint him blind.

Miguel Ulloa.

ELENA.

If, for beautiful Helen of old,
  Chosen by Paris, a city fell
And heroes of grace spent life and gold, —
  How many Troys under Fate's grim spell
Would perish by fire and sword for thee
If each one who sees thee might Paris be!

Augustin Lazo.

ROSARIO.[1]

Many a beautiful brown girl splendid,
With eyes of the night and morning blended,
Springs from the soil of Vera Cruz;
But amid all the loveliest faces,
Show me but one of your height and graces,
If but the gods would let me choose.

Exquisite rose of perfection! Soon
You can no longer hide; and then
When your bright face on the balcony shines
Under your window will hang, as at shrines,
Rosaries, made from the hearts of men.

Manuel Flores.

[1] Rosario, means also a rosary.

JOSEFINA.

From the chalice of her lips,
Perfume like a nectar slips;
And her accents, pure and fine,
Fill the heart with joy divine.

In her eyes benignant lie
Glories of the sunset sky,
That in radiant splendor preach
Eloquence that passeth speech.

If her beauty could but stand
Mirrored by an artist's hand,
Or inspire a poet's theme,
Man would think it but a dream.

Luis Alba.

VALENTINA.

When he should chant thy wondrous grace
  Dumb would the singer's music be;
  If he should strive to picture thee
Never a line could artist trace.
For, of a soul so fair as thine,
  How could the semblance e'er be true,
  If the glad brush that painted you
Had not been dipped in tints divine,
Or if the poet's lyre had known
No tones save those of earth alone.

Miguel Ulloa.

AMELIA.

Earth was a bower of roses rare and pale,
And heaven a starry sea;
Through the soft shadow sang the nightingale
His wondrous melody.
'T was springtime, and the dewy dawn was wet, —
When from its dreaming stirred,
The flower's soul in sweetness rising met
The bright soul of the bird;
And from that kiss thy loveliness was born:
Fair shrine that doth enclose
The song bird's voice, the gladness of the morn,
The perfume of the rose.

Aurelio Garay.

CONCHA.[1]

Above the white foam and the azure sea
A gleaming shell doth float,
And the bright sun that glows resplendently
Kisses the fairy boat.

The world it glads with beauty does not know
The treasure in its breast, —
The precious pearl, that radiant as the snow
Within its heart doth rest.

Sweet Concha! on life's sea thy beauty rides
And man's applause doth win;
But only we who love thee know it hides
A fairer pearl within.

Luis G. Ortiz.

[1] Concha is at once the name of a shell, and the diminutive of Concepcion.

MARIA.

If, mid the shades on high
They should meet, nor know her name,
"Beatrice!" would Dante exclaim;
"Leonora!" would Tasso sigh.

VIRGINIA.

Not hers are her graces,
To Gods they belong!
From Venus her charms;
Love lent her his arms;
The Muse who presides
Over harmony's tides
Hath shared with her gladly the sceptre of song.

Morales, the Master,
Doth list and rejoice;
Says: "More than Ulysses'
My fear and my bliss is;
He heard but the ringing
Of Sirens' sweet singing;
I know the full charm of Virginia's voice."

AURELIO GARAY.

AN ANSWER.

"And what is Poesy?" She said,
As laughingly she questioned me;
"The smile upon thy lips; the red
Ripe bloom upon thy cheek so fair;
The glinting of thy golden hair;
The light of morning in thy face;
Thy soul, thy form, thy moving grace;—
Thou! Thou thyself art Poesy."

Miguel Ulloa.

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